

Message Text

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PAGE 01 NEW DE 02980 240956Z
ACTION NEA-10

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: ENRG, TECH, IN
SUBJECT: PARLIAMENTARY QUESTIONS ON NUCLEAR AFFAIRS

1. SUMMARY: THE GOVERNMENT'S NUCLEAR POLICIES WERE
SUBJECT TO EXTENSIVE QUESTIONING IN THE LOK SABHA
ON FEBRUARY 22. THERE WAS NO TIME FOR ORAL DEBATE
ON ANY OF THE QUESTIONS, AND THE FOLLOWING IS A
SUMMARY OF THE GOI'S WRITTEN REPLIES ON U.S. FUEL
SUPPLY FOR TARAPUR, SOVIET HEAVY WATER, DAMAGE TO
THE BARODA HEAVY WATER PLANT, AND THE SHORTFALL IN
PLANNED INSTALLED NUCLEAR CAPACITY. END SUMMARY

2. ON THE US SUPPLY OF FUEL FOR TARAPUR, THE GOI
STATED THAT IT HAS THE "PUBLIC ASSURANCE OF THE
U.S.A. PRESIDENT THAT THE SHIPMENT OF NUCLEAR FUEL
WILL BE MADE AVAILABLE ... WE HAVE LEARNT THAT THE
MATTER IS BEING PROCESSED BY THE U.S. AUTHORITIES". TO
ANOTHER QUESTION THE GOVERNMENT REPLIED: "AS
FAR AS TARAPUR ATOMIC POWER STATION IS CONCERNED,
A DIALOGUE IS CONTINUING WITH THE U.S. GOVERNMENT
UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 02 NEW DE 02980 240956Z

TO ASSURE CONTINUED SUPPLIES OF ENRICHED
URANIUM FOR THE FUTURE."

3. ASKED ABOUT THE CONDITIONS OF THE SUPPLY OF
HEAVY WATER BY THE USSR, THE GOI STATED THAT THE
SAFEGUARDS ACCEPTED DID NOT GO BEYOND THOSE AGREED
TO WITH CANADA DURING THE 1976 RENEGOTIATIONS.

IT WAS NOTED THAT THE GOI HAD NOT BEEN NOTIFIED OF THE LONDON CLUB'S SET OF GUIDELINES FOR EXPORTS. JUSTIFYING THE NEED FOR SOVIET HEAVY WATER, THE GOVERNMENT EXPLAINED THAT THE PLANTS AT BARODA, TUTICORIN, TALCHER, AND KOTA WERE STILL UNDER CONSTRUCTION AND THAT SUFFICIENT QUANTITIES OF HEAVY WATER FROM THEM WOULD BE AVAILABLE "ONLY IN THE NEXT SEVERAL YEARS." SOVIET HEAVY WATER WAS NEEDED FOR THE SECOND UNIT OF THE RAJASTHAN STATION, WHICH HAS BEEN COMPLETED.

4. THE GOI PROVIDED THE FOLLOWING ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE HEAVY WATER CONTRACT WITH THE SOVIETS: AGREEMENT WAS REACHED IN SEPTEMBER 1976 FOR 200 METRIC TONS OF WHICH 55 TONS WERE RECEIVED DURING 1976. PRICE AND DELIVERY TERMS OF THE BALANCE TO BE SUPPLIED DURING 1977 AND 1978 WERE TO BE NEGOTIATED. AN AGREEMENT WITH THE IAEA FOR THE SAFEGUARDING OF THE SOVIET HEAVY WATER WAS SIGNED IN NOVEMBER 1977. AGREEMENT HAS NOW BEEN REACHED WITH THE USSR ON THE SUPPLY OF 70 OF THE BALANCE OF 145 TONS FROM THE ORIGINAL CONTRACT. THE GOI DENIED THAT THERE HAD BEEN ANY "SNAGS" IN THE SUPPLY OF HEAVY WATER FROM THE USSR.

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 03 NEW DE 02980 240956Z

5. REPLYING TO A QUESTION ABOUT THE DAMAGE TO THE BARODA HEAVY WATER PLANT CAUSED BY THE EXPLOSION ON DECEMBER 3, 1977, THE GOI STATED THAT ON THE BASIS OF VISUAL INSPECTIONS OF THE EXTERNAL DAMAGE THE COST OF REPAIRS/REPLACEMENT WAS APPROXIMATELY 12 MILLION RUPEES. IF NO MAJOR PIECE OF EQUIPMENT HAD TO BE REPLACED, THE PLANT COULD BE IN PRODUCTION BY THE END OF MARCH 1979. THE PRELIMINARY REPORT INDICATED THAT THE EXPLOSION WAS CAUSED BY "THE FAILURE OF THE AMMONIA QUENCH ASSEMBLY SPOOL PIECE." (ALL SIX DELHI DAILIES FEBRUARY 23 REPORTED THE ESTIMATED DAMAGE TO THE BARODA PLANT BUT DID NOT MENTION THE OTHER QUESTIONS ON NUCLEAR AFFAIRS RAISED IN THE LOK SABHA.)

6. THE GOI ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THE PRESENT INSTALLED NUCLEAR CAPACITY OF 640 MWE WAS SHORT OF THE 1095 MWE PLANNED TO BE INSTALLED BY THE END OF THE FIFTH PLAN, I., MARCH 31, 1978. THIS CAPACITY IS NOW EXPECTED TO BE REACHED BY 1980-81. THE SHORTFALL WAS BLAMED ON THE DELAY IN THE COMMISSIONING OF THE SECOND UNIT OF THE RAJASTHAN

TATION (220MWE) AND THE FIRST UNIT OF THE MADRAS PROJECT (EACH OF THE TWO UNITS AT MADRAS HAVE A RATED CAPACITY OF 235 MWE.)" ON ACCOUNT INTER ALIA OF EMBARGO BY SOME COUNTRIES ON EXPORT OF EQUIPMENT FOR NUCLEAR POWER PLANTS AND CONSEQUENT DELAYS IN THE LOCATION OF ALTERNATIVE SOURCES OF SUPPLY, DELAYED ELIVERY OF EQUIPMENT BEING PROCURED INDIGENOUSLY AND NON-AVAILABILITY OF HEAVY WATER." CONSTRUCTION OF THE RAJASTHAN PROJECT HAS BEEN COMPLETED AND ITS COMMISSIONING DEPENDS ON THE AVAILABILITY OF HEAVY WATER. THE FIRST UNIT OF THE MADRAS PROJECT IS "LIKELY TO ATTAIN CRITICALITY BY DECEMBER 1979 AND THE SECOND UNIT BY JULY 1981. FULL COMMISSIONING CAN BE EXPECTED A FEW MONTHS THEREAFTER."
UNCLASSIFIED

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PAGE 04 NEW DE 02980 240956Z

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